

Remarks

The Office Action mailed September 10, 2007, and made final has been carefully reviewed and the following remarks have been made in consequence thereof.

Claims 1-3, 5-6, 8-18, 20, 23-36 and 38-42 are pending in this application. Claims 1-6, 8-18, 20, 23-36 and 38-42 stand rejected. Claim 4 has been cancelled herein and Claims 7, 19, 21, 22 and 37 were previously cancelled.

The rejection of Claims 1-6, 8-18, 20, 23-36, and 38-42 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Krishnan et al. (U.S. Pub. No. 2002/0184068) ("Krishnan") is respectfully traversed.

Applicant respectfully submits that Krishnan does not describe or suggest the claimed invention. As discussed below, at least one of the differences between the present invention and Krishnan is that Krishnan does not describe or suggest a method for managing, storing, and disseminating compliance assurance (CA) information for a business entity that includes *creating within the database a hierarchy of business units included within the business entity*, and storing CA information and a plurality of predetermined audit checklists within the database including *organizing the stored CA information based on the hierarchy of business units such that CA information is retrievable and displayable by at least one of the business units included within the hierarchy of business units*. (Emphasis added.)

Moreover, Krishnan does not describe or suggest providing CA information in response to an inquiry *including CA information for a selected business unit included within the hierarchy of business units*. (Emphasis added.)

Furthermore, Krishnan does not describe or suggest generating a CA task summary report for the manager responsible for managing compliance for the plurality of locations, wherein for each location being managed by the manager *the summary report displays: active CA tasks, CA tasks completed year to date, total CA tasks year to date, percentage of CA tasks completed year to date, and total CA tasks past due*. (Emphasis added.)

Krishnan describes a communications network-enabled method and apparatus for determining and providing solutions to meet compliance and risk management standards and requirements, including asking, via a communications network, a user a plurality of questions in an electronic format that adapts a subsequent question based on a user inputted answer to a previous question, determining applicability of at least one of a law, a statute, a regulation, an industry standard and a policy based on the answer, determining enabling information, customized to the user's industry and assisting the user in prioritizing and allocating user resources to comply with the at least one of a law, a statute, a regulation, an industry standard and a policy that was determined to be applicable, based on the answer.

Claim 1 recites a method for managing, storing, and disseminating compliance assurance (CA) information for a business entity using a web-based system including a server system coupled to a centralized interactive database and at least one client system, the method includes "receiving CA information relating to the business entity at the server from a client system...creating within the centralized database a hierarchy of business units included within the business entity...storing CA information and a plurality of predetermined audit checklists within the centralized database including organizing the stored CA information based on the hierarchy of business units such that CA information is retrievable and displayable by at least one of the business units included within the hierarchy of business units...cross-referencing CA information...updating the centralized database periodically to maintain CA information...displaying on a client system a compliance calendar option, an audit tracking option, and audit tool option, wherein the compliance calendar option causes to be displayed on the client system CA tasks to be performed and corresponding CA deadlines for a selected location included within the business entity, wherein the audit tracking option prompts the user to input audit information for a selected location included within the business entity, and wherein the audit tool option prompts the user to select at least one audit checklist from the plurality of predetermined audit checklists stored within the database...processing at the server an inquiry submitted by the user including a selection of one of the options displayed on the client system...providing CA information in response to the inquiry including CA information for a selected business unit included within the hierarchy of business units...notifying users electronically of CA tasks to be performed at a selected location and corresponding CA

deadlines...tracking the CA tasks to be performed at the selected location and the corresponding CA deadlines to ensure compliance...determining at a selected time active CA tasks, CA tasks completed year to date, total CA tasks year to date, percentage of CA tasks completed year to date, and total CA tasks past due for a plurality of locations assigned to a manager...and generating a CA task summary report for the manager responsible for managing compliance for the plurality of locations, wherein for each location being managed by the manager the summary report displays: active CA tasks, CA tasks completed year to date, total CA tasks year to date, percentage of CA tasks completed year to date, and total CA tasks past due.”

Krishnan does not describe or suggest a method for managing, storing, and disseminating compliance assurance (CA) information as recited in Claim 1. More specifically, Krishnan does not describe or suggest a method for managing, storing, and disseminating compliance assurance (CA) information for a business entity that includes *creating within the database a hierarchy of business units included within the business entity*, and storing CA information and a plurality of predetermined audit checklists within the database including *organizing the stored CA information based on the hierarchy of business units such that CA information is retrievable and displayable by at least one of the business units included within the hierarchy of business units*. (Emphasis added.)

Moreover, Krishnan does not describe or suggest providing CA information in response to an inquiry *including CA information for a selected business unit included within the hierarchy of business units*. (Emphasis added.)

Furthermore, Krishnan does not describe or suggest generating a CA task summary report for the manager responsible for managing compliance for the plurality of locations, wherein for each location being managed by the manager *the summary report displays: active CA tasks, CA tasks completed year to date, total CA tasks year to date, percentage of CA tasks completed year to date, and total CA tasks past due*. (Emphasis added.)

Rather, Krishnan describes a communications network-enabled method and apparatus for determining and providing solutions to meet compliance and risk management standards and requirements, including asking, via a communications network, a user a plurality of questions in

an electronic format that adapts a subsequent question based on a user inputted answer to a previous question, determining applicability of at least one of a law, a statute, a regulation, an industry standard and a policy based on the answer, determining enabling information, customized to the user's industry and assisting the user in prioritizing and allocating user resources to comply with the at least one of a law, a statute, a regulation, an industry standard and a policy that was determined to be applicable, based on the answer.

In other words, in contrast to the recitations of Claim 1, Krishnan describes a method that includes supplying questions based on stored regulations to a user, and after receiving answers from the user, converting the regulations into a set of tasks, supplies, and training required to comply with the regulations. Krishnan does not describe or suggest storing *predetermined* audit checklists.

In addition, Krishnan does not describe, suggest or even mention *creating within a database a hierarchy of business units included within the business entity*, and storing CA information and a plurality of predetermined audit checklists within the database including *organizing the stored CA information based on the hierarchy of business units such that CA information is retrievable and displayable by at least one of the business units included within the hierarchy of business units*.

Krishnan also does not describe or suggest providing CA information in response to an inquiry *including CA information for a selected business unit included within the hierarchy of business units*.

Notably, although Krishnan describes a dashboard area that contains an overdue action items area, a learning goals area, and an accidents area for viewing by a manager/executive, Krishnan does not describe or suggest determining at a selected time: active CA tasks, CA tasks year to date, percentage of CA tasks completed year to date, and total CA tasks past due for a plurality of locations assigned to a manager and generating a CA task summary report that includes such information. Accordingly, for at least these reasons, Claim 1 is submitted to be patentable over Krishnan.

Claims 4 and 7 have been cancelled. Claims 2-3, 5-6 and 8-10 depend from independent Claim 1 which is submitted to be in condition for allowance. When the recitations of Claims 2-3, 5-6 and 8-10 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicant submits that dependent Claims 2-3, 5-6 and 8-10 are also patentable over Krishnan.

In addition to the arguments set forth above, dependent Claim 2 recites a “method in accordance with Claim 1 wherein creating within the centralized database a hierarchy of business units further comprises...creating within the database a hierarchy of business units within the business entity, wherein the hierarchy of business units includes business entity, organization, site, department and building...and storing CA information within the database based on the hierarchy of business units such that CA information is retrievable and displayable by the business entity, or by an organization which is included within the business entity, or by a site which is included within an organization which is included within the business entity, or by a department which is included within a site which is included within an organization which is included within the business entity, or by a building which is included within a department which is included within a site which is included within an organization which is included within the business entity.” Applicant submits that Krishnan does not describe, suggest or even mention a method as recited in Claim 2. For at least this additional reason, Claim 2 is also patentable over Krishnan.

Claim 11 recites a method for managing, storing, and disseminating compliance assurance (CA) information for a business entity using a web-based system including a server system coupled to a centralized interactive database, at least one managerial user system, and at least one client system, the method includes “receiving CA information relating to the business entity at the server from a client system, said CA information comprising site information including environmental information, health and safety information, legal information, corporate compliance information, and contacts information...creating within the centralized database a hierarchy of business units within the business entity...storing CA information and a plurality of predetermined audit checklists within the centralized database including organizing the stored CA information based on the hierarchy of business units such that CA information is retrievable and displayable by at least one of the business units included within the hierarchy of business

units...cross-referencing CA information...updating the centralized database periodically to maintain CA information...displaying on a client system a compliance calendar option, an audit tracking option, and audit tool option, wherein the compliance calendar option causes to be displayed on the client system CA tasks to be performed and corresponding CA deadlines for a selected location included within the business entity, wherein the audit tracking option prompts the user to input audit information for a selected location included within the business entity, and wherein the audit tool option prompts the user to select at least one audit checklist from the plurality of predetermined audit checklists stored within the database...processing at the server an inquiry submitted by the user including a selection of one of the options displayed on the client system...providing CA information in response to the inquiry including CA information for a selected business unit included within the hierarchy of business units...notifying users electronically of CA tasks to be performed at a selected location and corresponding CA deadlines...tracking the CA tasks to be performed at the selected location and the corresponding CA deadlines to ensure compliance...determining at a selected time active CA tasks, CA tasks completed year to date, total CA tasks year to date, percentage of CA tasks completed year to date, and total CA tasks past due for a plurality of locations assigned to a manager...and providing an electronic report of the CA tasks to be performed and the CA deadlines to the managerial user system, wherein the report displays active CA tasks, CA tasks completed year to date, total CA tasks year to date, percentage of CA tasks completed year to date, and total CA tasks past due for each of the plurality of locations assigned to the manager.”

Claim 11, as herein amended, recites a method for managing, storing, and disseminating compliance assurance (CA) information that includes steps essentially similar to those recited in Claim 1. Thus, it is submitted that Claim 11 is patentable over Krishnan for reasons that correspond to those given with respect to Claim 1. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 11 is submitted to be patentable over Krishnan.

Claims 12-15 depend from independent Claim 11 which is submitted to be in condition for allowance. When the recitations of Claims 12-15 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 11, Applicant submits that dependent Claims 12-15 are also patentable over Krishnan.

Claim 16 recites a method for manipulating CA information for a business entity using a web-based system including a server system coupled to a centralized interactive database and at least one client system, the method includes “receiving CA information relating to the business entity at the server comprising business information, organizational information, site information, assigned contact person information, COE/department information, building information, CA audit tracking information, CA task information, CA calendar information, CA task reminder information, frequency of reminder information, environmental information, health and safety information, quality information, legal information, human resources information, management information, and corporate compliance information...creating within the centralized database a hierarchy of business units included within the business entity...storing CA information and a plurality of predetermined audit checklists within the centralized database including organizing the stored CA information based on the hierarchy of business units such that CA information is retrievable and displayable by at least one of the business units included within the hierarchy of entities...updating the centralized database with CA information comprising adding and deleting information so as to revise existing CA information including at least one of CA task information, CA calendar information, and CA audit tracking information...displaying on a client system a compliance calendar option, an audit tracking option, and audit tool option, wherein the compliance calendar option causes to be displayed on the client system CA tasks to be performed and corresponding CA deadlines for a selected location included within the business entity, wherein the audit tracking option prompts the user to input audit information for a selected location included within the business entity, and wherein the audit tool option prompts the user to select at least one audit checklist from the plurality of predetermined audit checklists stored within the database...processing at the server an inquiry submitted by the user including a selection of one of the options displayed on the client system...providing CA information in response to the inquiry including CA information for a selected business unit included with the hierarchy of business units...notifying users of CA tasks to be performed at the selected location and the corresponding CA deadlines comprising transmitting an electronic message to the client system from the server system notifying the user of a CA task to be performed...determining at a selected time active CA tasks, CA tasks completed year to date, total CA tasks year to date, percentage of CA tasks completed year to date, and total CA tasks past due for a plurality of locations assigned to a manager...and

transmitting a CA task summary report to the manager responsible for managing compliance for the plurality of locations, wherein for each location being managed by the manager the summary report displays: active CA tasks, CA tasks completed year to date, total CA tasks year to date, percentage of CA tasks completed year to date, and total CA tasks past due.”

Claim 16, as herein amended, recites a method for managing, storing, and disseminating compliance assurance (CA) information that includes steps essentially similar to those recited in Claim 1. Thus, it is submitted that Claim 16 is patentable over Krishnan for reasons that correspond to those given with respect to Claim 1. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 16 is submitted to be patentable over Krishnan.

Claim 17 recites a network based system for managing, storing, and disseminating CA information for a business entity, the system including a client system, a centralized database for storing information, a server system configured to be coupled to the client system and the database, the server system further configured to “receive CA information relating to the business entity from the client system...create within the database a hierarchy of business units included within the business entity...store CA information and a plurality of predetermined audit checklists within the centralized database including organizing the stored CA information based on the hierarchy of business units such that CA information is retrievable and displayable by at least one of the business units included within the hierarchy of business units...cross-reference CA information...update the centralized database periodically to maintain CA information...display on the client system a compliance calendar option, an audit tracking option, and audit tool option, wherein the compliance calendar option causes to be displayed on the client system CA tasks to be performed and corresponding CA deadlines for a selected location included within the business entity, wherein the audit tracking option prompts the user to input audit information for a selected location included within the business entity, and wherein the audit tool option prompts the user to select at least one audit checklist from the plurality of predetermined audit checklists stored within the database...process an inquiry submitted by the user including a selection of one of the options displayed on the client system...provide CA information in response to the inquiry including CA information for a selected business unit included within the hierarchy of business units...notify users electronically of CA tasks to be

performed at a selected location and corresponding CA deadlines...tracking the CA tasks to be performed at the selected location and the corresponding CA deadlines to ensure compliance...determine at a selected time active CA tasks, CA tasks completed year to date, total CA tasks year to date, percentage of CA tasks completed year to date, and total CA tasks past due for a plurality of locations assigned to a manager...and transmit a CA task summary report to the manager responsible for managing compliance for the plurality of locations, wherein for each location being managed by the manager the summary report displays: active CA tasks, CA tasks completed year to date, total CA tasks year to date, percentage of CA tasks completed year to date, and total CA tasks past due.”

Claim 17 recites a network based system for managing, storing, and disseminating CA information that includes, among other things, a server configured to perform steps essentially similar to those recited in Claim 1. Thus, it is submitted that Claim 17 is patentable over Krishnan for reasons that correspond to those given with respect to Claim 1. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 17 is submitted to be patentable over Krishnan.

Claims 19 and 21-22 have been cancelled. Claims 18, 20 and 23-26 depend from independent Claim 17 which is submitted to be in condition for allowance. When the recitations of Claims 18, 20 and 23-26 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 17, Applicant submits that dependent Claims 18, 20 and 23-26 are also patentable over Krishnan.

Claim 27 recites a network based system for managing, storing, and disseminating CA information for a business entity, the system includes a client system, a managerial user system, a centralized database for storing information, a server system configured to be coupled to the client system, the managerial user system, and the database, wherein the server system is further configured to “receive CA information relating to the business entity from the client system, said CA information comprising site information including environmental information, health and safety information, legal information, corporate compliance information, and contact information...create within the database a hierarchy of business units included within the business entity...store CA information and a plurality of predetermined audit checklists within the centralized database including organizing the stored CA information based on the hierarchy of business units such that CA information is retrievable and displayable by at least one of the

business units included within the hierarchy of business units...cross-reference CA information...update the centralized database periodically to maintain CA information...display on the client system a compliance calendar option, an audit tracking option, and audit tool option, wherein the compliance calendar option causes to be displayed on the client system CA tasks to be performed and corresponding CA deadlines for a selected location included within the business entity, wherein the audit tracking option prompts the user to input audit information for a selected location included within the business entity, and wherein the audit tool option prompts the user to select at least one audit checklist from the plurality of predetermined audit checklists stored within the database...process an inquiry submitted by the user including a selection of one of the options displayed on the client system...provide CA information in response to the inquiry including CA information for a selected business unit included within the hierarchy of business units...notify users electronically of CA tasks to be performed at a selected location and corresponding CA deadlines...track the CA tasks to be performed at the selected location and the corresponding CA deadlines to ensure compliance...determine at a selected time active CA tasks, CA tasks completed year to date, total CA tasks year to date, percentage of CA tasks completed year to date, and total CA tasks past due for a plurality of locations assigned to a manager...and provide an electronic report of the CA tasks to be performed and the CA deadlines to the managerial user system, wherein the report displays active CA tasks, CA tasks completed year to date, total CA tasks year to date, percentage of CA tasks completed year to date, and total CA tasks past due for each of the plurality of locations assigned to the manager.”

Claim 27 recites a network based system for managing, storing, and disseminating CA information that includes, among other things, a server configured to perform steps essentially similar to those recited in Claim 1. Thus, it is submitted that Claim 27 is patentable over Krishnan for reasons that correspond to those given with respect to Claim 1. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 27 is submitted to be patentable over Krishnan.

Claims 28-32 depend from independent Claim 27 which is submitted to be in condition for allowance. When the recitations of Claims 28-32 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 27, Applicant submits that dependent Claims 28-32 are also patentable over Krishnan.

Claim 33 recites a computer program embodied on a computer readable medium for managing, storing, and disseminating CA information for a business entity, the program comprising a code segment that receives CA information relating to the business entity and then “maintains a database by adding, deleting and updating CA information...creates within the database a hierarchy of business units included within the business entity...stores CA information and a plurality of predetermined audit checklists within the database including organizing the stored CA information based on the hierarchy of business units such that CA information is retrievable and displayable by at least one of the business units included within the hierarchy of business units...displays on a client system a compliance calendar option, an audit tracking option, and audit tool option, wherein the compliance calendar option causes to be displayed on the client system CA tasks to be performed and corresponding CA deadlines for a selected location included within the business entity, wherein the audit tracking option prompts the user to input audit information for a selected location included within the business entity, and wherein the audit tool option prompts the user to select at least one audit checklist from a plurality of predetermined audit checklists stored within the database...processes an inquiry submitted by the user including a selection of one of the options displayed on the client system...provides CA information in response to the inquiry including CA information for a selected business unit included within the hierarchy of business units...notifies users of CA tasks to be performed at a selected location and corresponding CA deadlines...tracks the CA tasks to be performed at the selected location and the corresponding CA deadlines to ensure compliance...determines at a selected time active CA tasks, CA tasks completed year to date, total CA tasks year to date, percentage of CA tasks completed year to date, and total CA tasks past due for a plurality of locations assigned to a manager...and generates a CA task summary report for the manager responsible for managing compliance for a plurality of locations, wherein for each location being managed by the manager the summary report displays: active CA tasks, CA tasks completed year to date, total CA tasks year to date, percentage of CA tasks completed year to date, and total CA tasks past due.”

Claim 33 recites a computer program comprising a code segment that is programmed to perform steps essentially similar to those recited in Claim 1. Thus, it is submitted that Claim 33 is patentable over Krishnan for reasons that correspond to those given with respect to Claim 1.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Claim 33 is submitted to be patentable over Krishnan.

Claim 37 has been cancelled. Claims 34-36 and 38-40 depend from independent Claim 33 which is submitted to be in condition for allowance. When the recitations of Claims 34-36 and 38-40 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 33, Applicant submits that dependent Claims 34-36 and 38-40 are also patentable over Krishnan.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully requests that the Section 103 rejection of Claims 1-6, 8-18, 20, 23-36, and 38-42 be withdrawn.

Applicant respectfully traverses assertions of obviousness within the instant Office Action. For example, Applicant respectfully traverses the assertion that “it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill at the time the invention was made to include a multitude of various status/completion measurements to effectively communicates compliance work needs/progress to management.” (See page 4, paragraphs 3 and 5. Also see paragraphs 22, 24, 32, 34, 37, and 39). The United States Supreme Court has recently held that obviousness rejections must be supported with “articulated reasoning with some rational underpinning to support the conclusion of obviousness.” See KSR International Co. v. Teleflex, Inc., slip Opinion at page 14. The present rejection does not appear to meet this standard as it reflects no articulate reasoning why the independent or dependent claims are believed to be obvious, but rather is stated in the form of a conclusion of obviousness. Applicant accordingly requests specific explanation and articulation regarding the reasoning and rational underpinning for any obviousness rejection of the claims. It is not believed that adequate reasons why the presently claimed invention is believed to be obvious have been provided on the present record.

In view of the foregoing remarks, all the Claims now active in the application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Daniel M. Fitzgerald", is written over a horizontal line.

Daniel M. Fitzgerald
Reg. No. 38,880
ARMSTRONG TEASDALE LLP
One Metropolitan Square, Suite 2600
St. Louis, Missouri 63102-2740
(314) 621-5070